

Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 18 February 2015

Councillor Mike Cheshire: Leader's Report

Corporate Strategy, Finance.

Corporate Strategy

Each Councillor and each employee will have been given the Corporate Strategy, either electronically or on paper and it is part of the induction pack with new staff joining. Additionally the twice weekly Informal Communications update is provided electronically via the intranet as part of the Delivering the Corporate Strategy agenda.

Each formal paper coming to Cabinet and Full Council will need to refer to the Corporate Strategy as this is the document that all business plans and budgets are based on and referred to.

Any additional delivery of services not in the Business plans or in the Corporate strategy that requires funding, will need to be found elsewhere in order to balance the books.

For ease of reference, the Corporate Strategy and all business plans are available on the Intranet for Councillors to refer to, and I would hope that you all take the opportunity to do so.

Finance

The Finance Team completed the Statement of Accounts on time and they are now with our external auditors, Ernst and Young. Forward planning in conjunction with the auditors meant the accounts process was much smoother this year.

The testing of our new finance system is progressing well. The team are currently testing interfaces from live proving can export safely from the existing E-financials system ready for the 1 October go live.

On 1 April our new insurance contracts went live. These were for us by Fareham Borough Council as a joint procurement across all 11 districts in Hampshire. The collaborative approach attracted some large insurers, especially on property, who do not normally enter the local government market. The result of this is an annual saving to Havant Borough Council of £80,000 on our insurance premiums.

Following our very successful election night our Payroll Team paid around 200 volunteers who helped by the end of May.

Combined Authority

The Devolution and Combined Authority (CA) moves on a pace. In order to demonstrate HBC's endorsement of devolved power from Central Government we need to formally agree, in principle that we agree to the proposal for a Hampshire-wide Combined Authority - hence the proposal on the agenda with this full Council. You have already been made aware electronically with a Briefing Note on the Hampshire Combined Authority which was sent to you all on the 29th June 2015 - I will not re-iterate its contents here in full.

However, there is a potential for devolved government in the area covered by Hampshire (including Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight, which might include:

- a. Local control over funding for skills, post 16 education, apprenticeships and lifelong learning;
- b. More control over national infrastructure spending on transport and housing;
- c. Integration of health and social care;
- d. Freedom to borrow against forecast proceeds of local growth to support local infrastructure;
- e. Greater retention of growth in Business rates.

What is clear is that each Local Authority has to agree with the concept of a CA, and each authority has the right to have an input and take a full part in the Governance of any CA.

Be assured, I have made it very clear that we, HBC, will not be seen as an "add on" but we will be fully integrated into the running of any CA if it is approved.